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their hunting and fishing, or contacts with strangers, which are loudly chanted, accompanied by miming and dancing, during their nocturnal celebrations. One was sung and danced in my honour; Cendubai,[1] head of the Lulera hut, much struck by the sight of me in my hammock slung between two trees on nylon cords, delivered himself of a warning over the danger I was running using such thin cords. At the end of each 'verse' the refrain '*cué-cian-ghéghecíbée-cbéle*' (he will hurt himself) repeated his fear of the cords breaking.

Hunting and fishing episodes are to the Onges less interesting than themes like my safety, because to them they lack the repetitive refrain. In their dances, on the other hand, they prefer something else, to us monotonous, but for them always new, and even exciting; more than anything they love to dance the stages of courtship to its culmination, with the help of words and extraordinarily (to Western eyes regrettably) vivid gestures.

Birds, to the Onges, harbour the spirits of the dead, and it is for this reason that they are never eaten, contrary to the assertions of Brown.[2] Similar fears extend to lizards, the jungle cats, bats, rats and snakes. I have confirmed this among both the Onges and the Arioto. The latter even refused to eat some fat pigeons which I offered them not knowing of the taboo; they accepted the gifts, but the pigeons were eventually eaten by my own men. And the Onges whom I took with me to Port Blair for a few days refused point blank to eat pigeon or chicken.

The spirits select the Onges' food for them, in the sense that they regard everything as edible or poisonous, according to whether the guardian spirit is benign or malevolent. Given the curious adaptability of the spirits and the intensely practical way in which they operate it is hardly surprising that their benevolence or malignity coincides remarkably well with those foods which tend to promote normal health!

[1] I was sorry to learn that Cendubai died suddenly in 1955 aged barely forty.

[2] Curiously enough, while the Onges' fears lead them to reject out of hand any food of animal origin which is unknown to them, the same does not apply to vegetable foods. They ate half-rotten fruit, which I offered them, even though they had never seen it before, and they clamoured for rice and tea, so much so that in order to prevent them becoming addicted to the rice, as so often happens when primitive peoples meet a new food, I insisted on receiving equal quantities of yams in exchange for the rice and very sweet tea, to slow down their demands.

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Even the unique dances enjoyed by the Onges are to be seen among the Jarawas, with the characteristic marking of the rhythm by slapping the calves against the buttocks. This does not seem to have been a feature of the Arioto dances, in which the rhythm was by the *pukuta yemnga*, a kind of convex shield made of the very hard and aromatic red wood (*Pterocarpus dalbergoides*) which the termites never seem to attack. I was able to obtain one of these shields, the last that the twenty-three surviving Arioto possessed and the only musical instrument in the islands. It is played by one man with his feet, while the dancers, male and female, form lines on each side of him a short distance away. Before use the convex face is decorated with lines of white ochre and chains of tusk shells are hung from a hole at the end opposite to the one on which the player's feet beat; from the same hole runs a cord, which he holds in his hand to prevent the instrument moving away from him as he beats. The players change from time to time as the dancers shuffle on and on for hours in the light of the resin torches. But apart from the instrument itself, the rhythmic hand-clapping and the dancers singing in unison are the same throughout the Andamans.

The women clap their hands in rhythm, and then slap one thigh with the open palm of one hand, the other hand clasping the wrist, singing all the time. The men dance in Indian file, beating the ground first with the right heel, then with the left, the toes barely raised from the ground, moving a short way forward each time. As they dance they lean forward, then with hands clasped and their fingers interlaced. There are variations, but the basic step is always the same.

One difference between the Onges and the Jarawas is that in the latter both sexes are naked, while the Onge women have in recent times adopted the *naquineghe* or apron. Complete nudity was a characteristic of all the Negritos, including the Semang and Aetà, and the Jarawa migrations probably took place before the introduction of the *naquineghe*.

The present inability of the three peoples to understand each other is more a question of pronunciation than of difference in actual words. To examine the question fully it would be necessary to collect a large number of words and analyse their affinity; meanwhile we know that despite their inability to understand each other there is a close resemblance between the language of the Jarawas and Sentinellese and that of the Onges. Strict isolation can lead to